NEW
NICK CARTER WEEKLY

issued Weekly. By Subscription $2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at New York Post Office by STREET & SMITH, 238 William St., N. Y.

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NICK CARTER'S SUICIDE MYSTERY

OR PLAYING A MASTER STROKE

BY THE AUTHOR OF "NICK CARTER"

"I'll break your jaw if you work it again without my permission," said Nick, at the same time slipping handcuffs upon his prisoner's wrist.

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NICK CARTER'S SUICIDE MYSTERY;

OR,

Playing a Master Stroke.

By the author of "NICHOLAS CARTER."

CHAPTER 1.

THE SUICIDE MYSTERY.

The early rays of the morning sun were trying to peep through the lowered blinds of Mrs. Alice Tighe's dressing-room in the suite of apartments she occupied in the most fashionable hotel on the Boulevard Hausmann, in Paris, when that lady came into the room looking as though she had passed a sleepless night.

When she drew the curtains up it was to disclose eyes that were ringed about with dark circles and cheeks sunken from the lack of sleep, and her air was that of a person who was in the lowest depths of despair.

Turning from the windows to the dressing table, she commenced to remedy the ravages of worry, when the air was pierced with a succession of heart-rending shrieks. She stood for a moment as though petrified, and then, gasping, sank into the nearest chair.

At that moment the door was thrown open and her husband dashed into the room.

He looked at her a moment and then rushed to the dressing table upon which stood wine; poured a glass of it and came to her side and said: "Drink this. You will need it," and then he, too, sank upon a chair near by, moaning as though his heart would break.

The wine was gulped down, and then, having partially recovered from her shock:

"What is it? Oh, what is it?" she exclaimed. "It sounded like Louise's voice. Tell me, for Heaven's sake, tell me! What is the matter with her? Tell me or I shall go mad."

Harold Tighe looked at his wife and struggled for words, which seemed to choke him. She got to her feet and started for the door, but he was before her and said, blocking her way:

"Alice, prepare yourself to hear the worst. Our daughter is——"

"Dying?" she queried.

"Worse than that! She is dead! She has committed suicide!"

"Suicide!" she gasped. "It cannot be. I don't believe it. What would make her do that? She has no sorrow in the world."

"Come and see for yourself," he answered.

Then, leading the way, he took her to her daughter's room.

At the door they paused, and then, making a brave effort, the stupefied parents entered.

There, lying on her bed, was the once beautiful girl. The sunshine, now grown stronger, was shining on her head and the pearly whiteness of her neck. Across the throat was a gaping wound, evidently self-inflicted, from which the life blood had almost ceased to flow. The bed clothes were stained with the crimson horror, and her eyes were staring wide open at the door.

The mother looked just once, and then, before her husband could catch her, fell face downward on the floor, unconscious.

He lifted her none too tenderly, and as he did so several of the hotel people came running to the door. They stood there for a moment and then Harold Tighe rushed to it and slammed it in their faces.

As he did so, from another door there entered Beatrice Farley, who had been Louise's maid. She stood for a moment gazing at the bed, and then, seeing that the sorrowing father was looking at her, she dropped her eyes to the carpet and stood for a moment with all the color gone from her pretty yet brazen face.

She was about to speak, when he broke in:

"What do you know about this?" he asked.

"What do I know?" she answered. "I know nothing except that a moment ago a call boy came to my room on the top floor and said that my mistress had killed herself. How could I know anything?"

Then, as the tears started to her eyes, she sank on her knees by the bed and began to sob as though her heart would break.

Mr. Tighe looked at her for a moment and saw that she was in her wrapper, and that her hair was dishevled as though she had just arisen, and that the girl seemed to be the picture of grief.

His wife was recovering from her faint, and calling the maid to help him, they took the almost inanimate woman from the room and placed her on the couch in her dressing-room.

This done, he again asked the maid what she knew, but she answered, as before, that she only knew what he did, that she had first known of the tragedy when the call boy had awakened her.

Shortly after the police authorities came to the rooms and took the testimony of all concerned, but they also were as much in the dark as any one else. It must be a suicide. There were only two keys connecting the rooms of the dead girl with the corridors of the hotel. One of these was in the possession of Beatrice Farley, and the other was found on the dressing table of the room in which the suicide lay.

Beatrice was inconsolable with grief. In his heart Harold Tighe did not like Beatrice.

There had always been something about her that he did not like.

He did not quite know what it was, but she seemed not to be altogether sane sometimes. At times she would go about her work with a light heart, singing and willing to do anything that was asked of her. At other times she would be moody and would sit in the corner of her mistress' room looking into space, and it was necessary to speak to her several times before she would answer; when she did so finally it was as though she spoke from another world and had great effort to come back to this earth.

Altogether she was a peculiar woman, and Harold Tighe had advised his daughter to get rid of her, but the dead girl had been unwilling to do so because she was such an efficient servant that no one could boast of a better maid.

Harold Tighe was almost maddened by the loss of his daughter, and his wife was really for a time out of her head. The girl had been the last link between them.

Although she was only the stepdaughter of Alice Tighe, the woman had really loved the girl, and her death in that horrible fashion had been a great shock to her.

In the afternoon, when she was in a condition to be talked to, Harold Tighe went to her rooms and found her trying to eat a late luncheon. She started at his entrance, and after he had seated himself nearby she prepared herself for the ordeal that was to come.

"Well, this is an awful affair, is it not?" he asked, in rather a casual manner.

She said, reproachfully: "You don't seem to care very much for our darling."

He was angered by this, and spoke rather sharply:

"I don't seem to care! She was my only child, and before I married you had been my only solace. When I married you I thought that I was going to get a true wife and one who would love me as a wife should, but never have you cared except for the things that my money could give you! Of course, I ought to have known that you did not care for me, because I had only known you for a few weeks before marrying you, but you were a pretty woman and I was a fool. And now that the girl to whom—I will say this one thing for you—you have been a mother has died—God only knows who was the cause of her death, and why she was killed—I am done with you, and hereafter we will live apart. I will make sufficient allowance for you to live as you have with me——"

"Stop! Do you mean that you are going to throw me over in this manner, now that I am no longer as good-looking as I was?" she asked him.

"No! it is not that—I have at last decided that if you do not love me—and I know that you do not—I do not want to ever see you again."

"What will you do about your daughter's mysterious suicide? Are you going to dismiss it in the same manner that you are dismissing me, who am your legal wife?"

"What am I going to do about Louise's death? I will tell you what I am going to do. So long as the breath of life is left in my body I will try to find the reason she killed herself, and I will do so if it reduces me to beggary! And I shall succeed, although"—with a searching glance at her—"perhaps you would rather that I allow it to be placed in the list of deaths which have never been avenged."

At these words the woman started and looked at him with a frightened glance, with fear in her eyes.

"You seem to think that I have something to do with poor Louise's death, and——"

"Not so—I don't think for a moment that you would have done anything to hurt her—it was not your game. You understood too well that she was the only link between yourself and my money, and I know that you are not a fool."

"You are very heartless—I really cared for the poor dear, and now that she is gone I don't think I shall ever be happy again," and she sighed deeply and put her handkerchief to her eyes.

"Oh, well, that's all right, but don't turn on the waterworks. We have had enough of that for one day. There is one thing I wish to speak to you about. Are you going to retain that maid Farley in your employ or not?"

"I most certainly am, and I don't care to have you putting your oar into my affairs. If I wish to keep the girl, who was so faithful to my daughter, I will do so, and I don't care whether you like it or not," this with an air that plainly meant that she was becoming angry.

"Keep cool, my dear. Anger does not become your style of beauty. But if I were you I would not do as——"

"I don't care what you would or would not do, and I wish that you would get out of this room and leave me alone with my sorrow."

"Your sorrow!" the man answered, with a sneer. "I suppose that I have no sorrow? Well! you women are all the same. But mark my words, I warned you about that huzzy, Farley, and I can do no more. And also hereafter we will be man and wife in name only—I will not take my name away from you because I do not wish the publicity that it would bring upon me, but that will not make it necessary ever to see you again."

"Nor do I ever want to see you again! Only if you do not give me enough to live on I shall sue you in the courts and show the world what a heartless monster you are, and as for the present——"

"Never mind the present! We will sail for New York together, and then—please God!—that is the last we shall see of one another," he retorted.

CHAPTER II.

BLACKMAIL.

Just then a maid came into the room and presented a card to Mr. Tighe. He looked at it, and then, with a sneer, turned to his wife:

"It's that fellow Gray again! One of your admirers, my dear. Show him up, Bessie!"

Then, as the girl left the room, he turned again fiercely to his wife:

"Whatever you do, do not allow the world to connect your name with that man's, or, by heavens! I will kill you both! Do as you please, but be careful of my name and that of the dead girl! Remember that I will avenge any——"

At that instant the maid announced "Mr. Gray, sir," and both arose to greet their visitor.

He was a tall, well-built man of about forty odd years, and his temples were streaked with gray. He was a handsome man, unless one looked too close, and then it was seen that his eyes were too close together, and the lips which covered teeth a little too much like those of a wolf, were thin and cruel.

"Allow me to condole with you on your terrible loss," he said; "no one was more shocked than I, and when one thinks of it it seems almost impossible."

"Yes, it does," the father answered, "and I cannot think what can have been the motive that would force my darling to kill herself."

"It wasn't a love affair, was it?"

"No! That is impossible, absolutely so. If it had been I would have seen something of it."

"The police have done nothing?"

"Of course not! You don't think that these frog-eaters could catch anything except cold! They are too slow! I am afraid that the suicide mystery will never be cleared up," this with a despondent shake of the head.

Arthur Gray looked at Mrs. Tighe, and a flickering smile crossed his face, leaving it, however, more serious than before.

"It is a terrible thing," he said, "and I cannot see how the matter can be solved. It seems a terrible, terrible thing, as I have said before, that one so young and beautiful——"

Here the door opened and Beatrice Farley came in.

"A gentleman to see you, sir," she said, addressing Mr. Tighe.

"Who is he?" he asked.

"I don't know, I have never seen him before, but he has a priest's collar on, and I think he must be a clergyman come to see about the burial, sir," she answered.

"All right, I will come in a moment," Mr. Tighe answered, and, rising, he excused himself and followed the girl from the room.

As he closed the door behind him, Gray, with the stealthy step of a cat, glided to it, and, after waiting a moment, quietly opened it, only to see the slim figure of Beatrice Farley slip into the door of the next room, plainly showing that she had been listening at the keyhole to hear what was being said between Gray and Mrs. Tighe.

"That's a nice maid of yours! Do you pay her to listen at doors, and does she report to you the pleasant things she undoubtedly hears?" he sneered at Mrs. Tighe.

"She was not listening. I know she was not! She is not that sort of a girl."

"Well, it looked very much like it, and I do not care to have what I have to say to you reported to any one. From what I know of her, she would not hesitate to sell what she hears or, at least, to blackmail you."

"Blackmail! did you say? You are the only——"

"Stop, I say! Don't you dare to call me a blackmailer! If you do you will be made to regret it."

"Regret it! My God, I regret the day I ever saw you, and I will regret as long as I live that you were not lynched, as the papers said you had been, James Green——"

"Stop! you Jezebel; if you say that name again I will send you to join that daughter of yours, only I guess you'd find the climate slightly different where you'd be!"

"Don't say such things to me! If ever a mortal

man should be afraid of death, you are the person. Think of the——"

"Think of nothing! I am not afraid of anything on or below this earth, and you know it! As for the things that James Green was unfortunate enough to have to do—well, Arthur Gray neither cares nor knows anything about them! So, you see, I have nothing to fear."

"And so, having nothing to fear, you persecute a poor, defenseless woman!" she retorted.

"Yes, a poor, defenseless woman!" he sneered. "Poor thing! Why don't you get some one to take care of you? What's the matter with your husband?"

"My husband does not care if I live or die," she answered, "and I think that he would be glad if I were to die."

"Yes, and there is a good chance that you will do so!" he threatened, with a wicked leer. "That is, if you don't do what I asked you to."

"My God, how can I do it?" she asked.

"How? That's easy. Strike your dear Harold for the money, and he will be only too glad to give it to you! It is not very much, either, only twenty thousand dollars, and that is a mere drop in the bucket for such a rich man as he is."

"But, James——"

"Stop! My name is George; if you wish to use the first name."

"Well, George, then, I canot get a cent out of him. Only just before you came he told me he was tired of me."

"Tired—whew! He said that, did he?" Gray laughed. "I don't blame him! Another man I know could not stand it as long as he did."

"Yes, but the other man was a blackguard, and will be one until justice catches and hangs him, as he deserves."

"That is amusing," Gray retorted, with a laugh. "You don't seem to know that the rope that will hang him has never been made, and, what is more, never will be."

"Sneer all you please, but the time will come when you will be glad to go down on your knees and beg the help of the poor woman you have scorned."

"All right, I will wait for that time, but what I want to know is how soon I am to have that money? And I want to know soon! I warned you that if you did not get it for me at the end of ten days that something terrible would happen, and I told you that it would be Louise who would suffer."

"Yes, yes, I know, and I tried to get it for you—I asked my husband, but he said he would only give it to me if I would tell him what I wanted it for."

"Then why did you not tell him? He, poor, simple fool, would have believed anything."

"That's where you are mistaken. I told him I needed it to assist a distant relative of mine who had written to me for help, and instead of giving me a check he asked to see the letter, and, of course, I had to admit that I had mislaid it."

"That was easy! Why did you not tell me that before?" Then, after a moment's thought, "I will tell you what I will do. I will fake a letter for you, and you can try it. If you succeed, well and good. If not, you know——" and he drew his hand across his throat in a very suggestive way, and added: "It will be you this time, though!"

The woman paled under her painted cheeks and gasped for utterance.

Gray smiled a slow and very evil smile. At last she recovered and said:

"Oh, Good God, how can you allow such vipers to live?" she exclaimed.

At this Gray laughed.

"You have just ten days more to live, that is if the money is not forthcoming, and you'd beter hustle."

At this the woman's cheeks became a shade paler than death and her breath came in gasps.

"Oh, Jim! Oh! oh! George, I mean," as his fingers reached for her throat and he almost growled with rage at her mistake. "Don't kill me! don't—don't hurt me! I will do as you wish, if I have to, to—to—do anything to get it——"

"You'd better!" he threatened, "or you know what is coming to you."

"You would not murder me as you did poor Louise——"

"Murdered Louise!" he thundered. "Who said I murdered her? Woman, you are crazy! I said that something would happen to her, but I did not say that she would be killed, and, what is more, I can truly say by the memory of my mother, which is the only thing that I hold sacred, that I did not have anything to do with the murder—it was no murder—a suicide."

"And yet——"

"And yet I threatened her! I know it. The mysterious agency which I employed escaped my complete control and exceeded my instructions. I would never have killed her had I been doing the act myself."

"But you were the cause of her death."

"Don't you dare say that! I meant only to hurt her enough to show you that I was in earnest. But, by Heaven, when the next ten days are over you will be killed, and in a much more horrible way than she died!"

By this time Mrs. Tighe was almost insensible with fear, and slipped from her chair to the floor. Gray stooped to pick her up, but she shrank away from him with a look of utter horror. The poor, weak woman, whose only crime was her weakness, almost shrieked at his touch. He placed her on the lounge and turned to go. At the door he pointed a finger at her, which seemed to her to be the finger of fate, and said:

"Remember! Remember! if at the end of ten days the money has not——"

At that moment he heard a hand on the doorknob, and stepped aside as it was opened to admit Harold Tighe and a clergyman.

CHAPTER III.

NICK CARTER ON THE CASE.

Tighe looked at Gray and then at his wife, and for a moment did not speak. Then he introduced the clergyman, first to his wife and then to Gray.

The Rev. Nicodemus Jepson was the name he gave him, and it seemed to suit him well. Although broad-shouldered and athletically built, he seemed to be an old man, and his whiskers, which hid a very firm chin, were those of a man well on in life. He moved slowly and almost with effort, and when he spoke his words were those of a very well educated and thoughtful man.

The Rev. Nicodemus Jepson gave but a cursory glance to Mrs. Tighe, and to himself muttered: "A very weak woman, who might be influenced strongly for good or evil." But when he looked at Gray his eyes narrowed and their glance was keen.

He made the customary remarks, and then dropped his eyes as though somewhat embarrassed. But to himself he said:

"Well! well! I know that face. Who can it be? Now I know. He looks like that crook, Jimmy Green, who was said to have been hung down in Texas for horse stealing! I wonder if he was really hung or——"

Then Gray broke in on his soliloquy to say good-afternoon, as he had an appointment to keep.

Gray left, and the clergyman turned to the sorrowing mother and began to offer what condolences he could.

Harold Tighe excused himself and hurried to the lobby of the hotel to see if Gray had gone. He found that he had left the place and taken a cab, but no one knew where the cabby was ordered to drive.

The Rev. Nicodemus Jepson talked to Mrs. Tighe for a time, and, had she been in condition to notice, she would have wondered why he asked so many questions about her relations with her daughter and about the happenings of the previous few days. Shortly after he left the hotel, promising to return and see her as soon as possible, and offered her any assistance his long residence in Paris could allow him to give.

When Harold Tighe was told that a clergyman wanted to see him he supposed that it was one of the cloth coming to offer the usual condolences and trying to assist in any manner in the disposition of the body of his daughter. When he reached the reception-room he was in a frame of mind which was appropriate to the occasion, and when the clergyman, the Rev. Nicodemus Jedson, arose and said, "Mr. Tighe, you sent for me, did you not?" he was a little astonished, because he did not remember having done so.

"Why, I don't think I did. But I am glad to see you, and my wife will be very glad also. It is very kind of you to come to us in our grief."

"Well, that isn't bad, is it?" and the Rev. Jedson smiled. "I did not——"

"What is not bad?" Harold Tighe almost angrily answered. "I think things are very bad, and I don't see where there is any cause for jest! In fact, this is a very——"

"Pardon me, Mr. Tighe, but you are mistaken," the clergyman answered. "Did not you send for me? Look and tell me?"

And so saying, the clergyman, with one motion, removed his whiskers and white hair and stood up, revealing the well-known, handsome face and the keen gray eyes of Nicholas Carter, the greatest detective the world ever knew.

Harold Tighe jumped to his feet in amazement, and for a moment was speechless.

"Mr. Carter! Nicholas Carter! How did you get here? Why, I thought you were on the other side of the world! I cannot understand it."

The peerless detective smiled and assumed his disguise again before replying. After again becoming the benevolent clergyman, he answered Harold Tighe's questions.

"Why, I happened to be over here running down those national bank swindlers, of which you have heard, and when you cabled to New York early this morning to me, my assistant, Chickering Carter, replied to me, and I am here. I have read about the suicide in the papers, and——"

"You have already formed your opinion?"

"Not so fast, Mr. Tighe. A detective cannot give out an opinion until it suits his book, and at present I have, like a great many others, nothing to say."

"At least, you will take the case, won't you?"

"Of course I will! That's what I am here for."

"Thank Heaven! At least I shall feel that my beautiful Louise will be avenged."

At this Nick Carter smiled.

"Well, I hope that your faith in me is not misplaced."

"Not misplaced? What do you mean?"

"Well, Mr. Tighe, I might as well tell you. This is a very difficult case, and at present I cannot see the least clew. It seems to be a case which is to prove the rule. Nick Carter has never failed, but this may be the time which will mark him as a great detective or one who has had great luck. But——"

"Mr. Carter, you cannot fail! You never have and never will."

Nick Carter smiled at the older man's faith in his powers, which to every one who met him seemed little less than supernatural, and then said, stretching out his hand:

"If the murderer of your beautiful child is in this world and can be found by mortal means, I will not rest until justice has been satisfied. From what I have seen I am convinced that it was no suicide, but a murder."

Harold Tighe grasped the detective's outstretched hand warmly, and for the first time since the discovery of his daughter's body showed emotion.

"Mr. Carter, you give me hope that I may yet be the avenger of Louise," he said, the tears welling to his eyes, "and I shall not rest until, if, as you say, it was a murder, the hand which struck her down is manacled, and its owner is in the electric chair or under the guillotine."

Then they discussed the matter, going over each particular until the great detective was in possession of the full facts as we know them. He then desired to see the rooms where the Tighes lived, and particularly that in which the daughter's body lay.

They went to the Tighe apartments, and when they came to the daughter's room Mr. Tighe was about to open the door when Nick Carter grasped his hand and prevented him.

"Listen," he said, in a very low voice.

They both stood for a moment and inside the room they heard a low murmuring, broken now and then by sobs. Carter listened at the keyhole, but the words were spoken in too low a tone and he could not hear what was being said.

After listening a moment he realized that nothing

was to be gained by waiting, and he motioned to Tighe to open the door.

Noiselessly he did so, and there, kneeling by the couch upon which the dead girl lay, was Beatrice Farley. Her face was covered by her hands, and her shoulders shook with the depth of her sobs. She did not look up until Harold Tighe spoke, and then she jumped to her feet and, with a face as pale as death, exclaimed:

"Oh! oh! Don't take me! Oh, don't——"

"What did you say?" quickly asked Tighe. "What did you say? What was that?"

But the girl had recovered her self-possession and smiled sadly.

"I must have been dreaming. I was watching by her bed, and when you came in I was startled."

"You must have been," grimly observed Tighe. "You had better go to your room."

The girl struggled to her feet, and as she passed the clergyman, who had been an interested observer of the scene, he spoke to her, taking her by the arms and looking into her eyes.

"Don't grieve too much, my dear. Your mistress is in heaven, and is much better off than if she were here in this vale of tears."

Then he let her go and the girl left the room. While he looked at her Nick Carter was printing her face indelibly on his memory.

Mr. Tighe looked at the Rev. Jepson with an inquiring look and the detective smiled.

"I just wanted to know her when we meet again. Her face is familiar, and I seem to have seen it before."

Then, under the guidance of Mr. Tighe, the detective was shown the whole apartments, ending with the dressing-room in which he met Mrs. Tighe.

And we know what transpired there.

CHAPTER IV.

A PECULIAR MAID.

When Nick Carter left the hotel he was in a very peculiar frame of mind. He had seen all there was to be seen, and had talked with all those who seemed interested in the tragedy, and his mind was in confusion.

In his practically unlimited experience it was not often that he found a crime—and especially such a one as this—without a motive, and the motive was usually very prominent. He was convinced that it was a murder—not suicide. To track the criminal was only less easy than to estimate the reasons that prompted the act.

Of course, it was not always easy to arrest the lawbreakers, as they were nearly always very desperate characters and would not give in without a struggle.

But in this case the famous detective had very slender grounds to work on.

The girl had apparently, so far as evidence went, committed suicide. He knew she was murdered, but who had done it and for what purpose it was done was the deepest mystery.

At the hotel he had noticed very little which could be connected with the murder, but now that he had time to think of it, the peculiar manner which Beatrice Farley had shown when she was surprised by the bedside of the dead girl came back to him. Of course, there was nothing unnatural in her grief, but still her confusion when she realized that she had been watched and her alarm when she sprang up beseeching them not to take her, were strange features of the case. Beatrice Farley would bear watching, he decided, and until she showed that there was no connection between herself and the murder he made up his mind to shadow her continually.

After reaching his rooms in a modest little hotel not far from the splendid one in which the Tighes were staying, he sat and smoked for a while, thinking out the different ends of the case.

There was so little to go on, so little to fasten any theory to, that Nick Carter almost felt discouraged. But, as was always his way when the case was the most hopeless, he would shut his firm jaw tightly and say to himself:

"Well, Nick Carter has not failed yet, and it is too good a record to break."

And then he would put on one of his numerous dis-

guise, and before many hours would be in possession of the facts which were needed to convict the criminals.

In this case he smoked for a little while and then jumped to his feet in a hurry and began to do a lightning change act.

In less than ten minutes a common, every-day hotel porter left the hotel where Nick Carter was staying, and in a short time applied to the head porter of the hotel at which the Tighes were staying for a job. The man was tall and broad-shouldered and, although he wore a heavy beard, was readily employed, and in a few minutes after he had seen the head porter was engaged in carrying trunks to and from the elevators.

It is customary for several of the porters to remain on watch during the night, each taking certain hours. Antoine, which was the name of the new porter, was, at his own request, given the watch from six until midnight, and his post was the third floor, the floor on which the Tighe apartments were.

As soon as it was time for him to be on duty he took his station at the end of the hall, where he could see all who entered or left the Tighes' rooms.

A few minutes after seven Beatrice Farley came to her mistress' door and, after saying who she was, entered.

Carter immediately went to the door and listened. The conversation inside was in a very low tone of voice, but to his keen ears it was easily understood. The maid was speaking.

"I would like to be allowed to leave a few hours early to-night," she said.

"Why, Beatrice," Mrs. Tighe answered, "you cannot want to leave me to-night. I was going to have the dear old time we used to have in the old days, you know, before I married. I will not be able to sleep very well and will dream."

"I am very sorry," Beatrice Farley answered, "but I must go out for a little while to-night, and——"

"You must, you say? You have a peculiar way of speaking to your mistress, I think."

"It may be peculiar," she answered, "but when you stop to think that I have proof that will convict the person who killed Louise, and I——"

"You have the proof! Girl, do you——"

"Yes! I said I had proof, and if I am driven to it I will not hesitate to use it."

"What do you mean?" Mrs. Tighe demanded. "You talk as though you were threatening me. Your proof does not concern me except that I would give all I own to have her murderer brought to justice."

Beatrice Farley smiled at this last statement and said:

"I don't think you would like to be hung very much, would you?"

"I like to be hung?" Mrs. Tighe gasped, in a dazed way. "What do you mean? What are you threatening, you impudent huzzy?"

"Don't call names, my lady!" Beatrice Farley was growing angry herself now. "You will cringe at my feet for mercy if——"

"I beg for mercy? Why, girl, you are insane! Why should I?"

"Why should you? Well, I will tell you! I came into your bedroom as soon as I came down from my room this morning, and on your dressing table I found this all bloody, lying on a handkerchief."

And she reached into her bosom and brought out a long-bladed and heavy-handled manicure knife, which had been given Mrs. Tighe by her husband, and which belonged to a set of toilet articles that had been admired by all who had seen them.

Mrs. Tighe recoiled from the girl, and, after catching her breath, said, in a weak voice, looking at the fateful weapon:

"Oh, Beatrice, you cannot have found it—you cannot."

"But I did, and it was all bloody, as I said. Now, will you let me go out?"

"Oh, yes—go, go!" And then, as the maid turned to leave the room, she called to her: "Beatrice, Beatrice, before you go give me that knife, please."

"Oh, no, I will not," the girl replied, with a saucy toss of the head; "I need it in my business, and I cannot let you have it."

"But it is mine."

"I don't care if it is," she replied. "I found it, and as it proves something of which I was afraid of being convicted, I will keep it. But remember that I will [illegible] have it, and—— Well, I am going now," and she passed the [illegible] and went out.

The porter was dozing in his chair at the end of the hall, and as she passed him she said:

"Good-night, sleepy head," and then went to her room on the top flor.

Antoine answered her with a grunt, but the moment she was out of sight awoke with the most suspicious activity and carefully and quickly followed her to her room, where he saw her shut the door and heard the key turned in the lock.

During the interview between Mrs. Tighe and her maid he had listened at the door, and when the girl closed her door on the maid he hastily [illegible] to his chair and assumed the pose of the sleepy porter.

After Beatrice Farley closed the door of her room Antoine started for the door to the street. When he got there he went to the porter's room.

Nearly after a middle-class-looking young fellow came out of the servants' door of the hotel and walked quickly away.

When he came to where a dark alley ran into the street he stopped and waited in the darkness where he could not be seen and watched the entrances of the hotel, which were all visible from where he stood. He looked like a gentleman's servant or a coachman out for a little recreation. He was clean-shaven, but for a little [illegible] waxed mustache, and his eyebrows and hair were the same color. His clothes were what would be worn by a man in his station of life, and he walked with a [illegible] which made one think that he must have been [illegible] the service in military [illegible] would say.

If he had [illegible] he would have had [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

tective saw no one admit her. The door was shut noiselessly, and as he listened with straining ears he heard the key very quietly turned. There was not another sound, and Carter realized that his pursuit had come to nothing so far.

The questions which presented themselves to his mind were:

Why did Beatrice Farley go to this house?

Whom did she meet there, and what was going on inside?

He racked his brain for the answer to these, but no solution presented itself.

Then he commenced to prowl around the house, keeping as near to it as possible and avoiding all light. He made a complete trip about it, but saw no window or other opening which would admit him.

If he could get inside he would be able at least to see what was going on, but he realized that it might mean death if he were found out. He had seen enough to feel sure that only people who wished to avoid notice lived in the house, and from his long experience he knew that such persons had good reason to lie hid and to avoid beaten paths.

He was lying stretched at full length on the grass, peering in through a crack in a cellar window, the shade of which had not been entirely pulled down, when he heard footsteps on the stone flagging of the sidewalk.

In a moment he was where he could see who it was and also the door of the house.

A man came up the steps very quietly and knocked on the door in the same way Beatrice Farley had done and was admitted in the same noiseless manner. Carter's impulse was to give the same knock, but he realized that if he tried to enter he would be discovered, and that if found out the game would be spoiled.

Instead he waited a minute or two, and as nothing happened, returned to the window. Feeling that he must find out what was going on, he took out a long, thin "jimmy" he was never without and tried the window.

To his surprise it yielded without noise, and he slid into the cellar.

He expected to feel the floor about four feet below the window, as was usual in that type of house, but when he let his body down his feet touched nothing.

CHAPTER V.

A STRANGE ENCOUNTER.

Nick Carter was just making up his mind to drop when he heard a shuffling as of some animal, and a sharp, deep growl came to his astonished ears.

Looking over his shoulder, he saw two deep, green eyes below him against the wall, and then, as they sank a few inches lower, he realized that the beast was about to spring.

To see was to act with Nick Carter, and with an almost superhuman effort he drew his body up to the window. He was none too soon.

The animal, with a short growl, jumped at him and fastened its fangs in his trouser leg. The cloth tore and before the brute could recover itself Carter was outside and had closed the window. In his haste he banged it, and the beast set up a howl.

Carter listened a moment, hoping that its master might come to the cellar to see what was the matter, but instead heard the front door open and bang. He flattened himself along the wall of the house, and as he did so a man came around hurriedly.

Carter did not wait, but met him, and hit him on the point of the jaw with his right and followed the blow up with another in the stomach.

The man fell as though he were shot, and Carter bent over him.

"Arthur Gray, by Heaven!" he exclaimed, in surprise.

But the man was recovering from the blow and there were noises in the house, so Carter, feeling that he was in danger, crept away to the shadow of the next house and hid near some bushes.

The door of the dark house opened and a short, thickset man came out.

He ran around to the side of the house and saw Gray lying on the ground. He bent for a moment over him, and then, with a muffled curse, picked him up as though he were a baby and carried him into the house.

In a moment he came out again with a chain in his hand. Going to the window, he spoke to the beast inside and received a howl in answer.

Then, bending down, he carefully examined the window sill, and rushed frantically into the house. In a second he emerged, being dragged by an enormous dog, which looked like a Great Dane, but it was almost as large as a calf.

The dog ran to the window and commenced to snuff at the sill.

Nick Carter, realizing that he would be tracked by the brute, slid off in the shadow and put several blocks between himself and the danger with the utmost speed.

His first idea was to return to the hotel and go on duty again as a porter. On second thought, however, he realized that it would be rather foolish to allow his query, as he had come to regard Beatrice Farley, to suspect he was curious to know what Gray was doing there.

Of course, there had been an appointment between them, and people don't make them in out of the way places for the pleasure of doing so.

So he decided to remain on watch. For about an hour there was no sign of life about the house, and he was beginning to feel it rather tiring. However, his vigil soon ended.

Muffled to the ears, Gray and the short man came out. They waited on the sidewalk a moment and then the heavily veiled woman, whom Carter had discovered to be Beatrice Farley, joined them. They spoke together a moment and then came to where Carter stood in the shadow of a porch, still talking.

Carter listened, and he heard Gray say:

"All right. You go back to the hotel, Bessie, and wait until you hear from me. This gentleman and I have a little business to attend to." And then they went on.

Carter shadowed the party to the corner and then they split up, Beatrice Farley going in the direction of the hotel and the two men starting for the other side of town.

Nick Carter did not have to communicate to do this task. He knew that the woman was under Gray's instructions and that she would not do anything until he told her to.

Gray was talking to the other man in a low tone, and seemed to be trying to convince him of something he did not want to do. The short fellow, whom Carter mentally named "Shorty," was very stubborn. He shook his head again and again, and Carter felt that he must get near them and hear what was the proposition he would not give in to.

There was only one way to do it, and he took that means.

He walked a little faster than they did, and when they came to a light passed them and jostled them as though he were drunk.

He heard the words:

"I tell you it's too damn dangerous—the police are onto this 'phony' money game, and I am done with it, and I tell——" And just then Carter jostled them.

Gray swore at him, and for a moment, as he stood under the light, it looked as though "Shorty" was going to smash him, but Carter apologized in a drunken fashion and they both laughed at him and, saying, "What a lovely jag," went on.

Nick Carter had seen a good deal in the moment he faced them. He recognized the smaller man as a crook who had been caught passing counterfeit money, and whom the detective had sent up for several years. Then he was sure that there was something doing and that he would only gain by following them.

They went to a main street and took a car.

Carter was on the rear platform, and when they got off in a very tough part of town he went a block farther and followed suit.

They went down a side street and then entered a very dirty-looking drink shop. Carter was stumped for a moment because he knew if he followed them he would be recognized. But a little thing like that did not bother him long.

He pulled his wig off and changed his mustache for a full beard, and then, after assuming a stoop which completely disguised his naturally athletic figure, entered.

There was a bar in the American style and a row of

small tables on the other side of the place. Behind the bar was a man who might have passed for a crook anywhere, and whose face was sufficient evidence anywhere to keep the police watching him. He looked at Carter and then asked him in a very gruff voice what he wanted to drink. Carter ordered a drink which he knew would take time to mix and then very casually glanced about the place. In the corner sat Gray and the other crook with a large black bottle between them.

They were still arguing, and Gray seemed to be on the point of losing his temper. He raised his voice and almost shouted:

"By all that's holy, you must do it! If you don't ——"

"You'll peach to the police, I s'pose," the short man sneered.

"That's just what I will do, and don't you forget it." The other looked at him keenly for a moment and Gray met his eyes without flinching.

"Do you mean that?" "Shorty" asked.

"I certainly do," answered Gray, and he looked as though he meant it.

The smaller man looked at him for a moment, and Carter expected to see him spring at Gray and end the matter there, but in a moment the fire died out of his eyes and he put on a look of despair.

"I ben peach!" he said. "I can't do it, and I'd sooner go to jail than have the blood of another woman on my hands. Call the police."

"Oh, I'll call them soon enough. From this day on you will be a marked man in this city, and when you leave here the police in all Europe will be notified. Oh, I see your finish."

"Oh, don't do it, Mr. Gray—don't do it!" pleaded the man.

"Then you will do the little job?" Gray asked.

"No, I can't—I guess the cops will have to get me." "Shorty" was looking the picture of despair.

Nick Carter had taken his drink to a table, and looked as though he had fallen asleep over it. To all intents and purposes he was—all except his ears—they were doing duty for the rest of his senses.

"Then you aren't going to do it?" asked Gray again.

"No."

"Then I'm done with you," he said, and arose to go.

"But don't go away. Let's talk it over a little more. I may change my mind." The short man was begging now.

"You change your mind right now. I'll give you a minute," Gray answered.

"Shorty" hesitated for a moment, and then spoke up: "Look here, Mr. Gray, it's a dirty job, and you know it, and, what's more, the cops will nab me sure, so I ain't going to do it."

"All right," Gray interrupted. "You'll have only yourself to blame if you're pinched." And then he slammed the door behind him and started away.

"Shorty" got to his feet and stood for a moment, thinking quickly, and bolted for the door. As he passed Carter the detective heard him mutter: "By God, I'll kill him first!" And then he, too, slammed the door.

As soon as he thought it was safe, Carter bolted out and saw "Shorty" turn the next corner. He ran after him, and was pleased to see Gray about three blocks away and the crook hot on his trail. Carter was amused at the amateur way "Shorty" shadowed his man and feared that Gray would see him.

Gray, however, was in a hurry, and not thinking of a little thing like a man on his trail thirsting for his blood. "Shorty" was gaining on his man, and Carter began to catch up with him.

Gray was walking faster now. "Shorty" was almost running, and Carter was running as fast as he could. He began to dread that he would not be in time.

In the middle of the block, where the light was not very good, "Shorty" caught up with Gray. He walked stealthily behind him for a step or two and then fumbled in the breast of his coat with his right hand. He drew out a long knife and Carter saw it glitter in the light.

Step by step he walked with Gray; he raised his knife to strike. His hand was caught in a grip of steel from behind and the knife dropped from his nerveless fingers. It clattered as it fell, and Gray stopped in his stride and wheeled about.

Carter had his man against the wall of a nearby house and was reaching for his handcuffs. Gray asked what was the matter.

"This man was going to stab you," Carter replied.

"To stab me?" Gray feigned surprise.

"Yes, and he had followed you for a good many blocks. I saw him and trailed in to find out what was doing."

"You must have been mistaken. I know that man, and he would not hurt me—he knows better," Gray sneered.

"No, by God, I don't know better, you rotten blackmailer. You——" "Shorty" fairly yelled.

"Shut up!" commanded Carter.

Then "Shorty" lost his head.

"I'll kill him! I'll kill him," he panted, struggling in Carter's grasp. In a moment he was free.

He stooped to get the knife and then he arose.

"I'll break your jaw if you work it again without my permission," said Nick, at the same time slipping handcuffs on his prisoner's wrists.

"Oh, I won't do it again! I won't do it again!" "Shorty" gasped, in fear that Carter would carry out his threat.

Gray turned to Carter. "It seems that you are right, my man," he said, in his most patronizing manner. "He evidently takes me for some one else," he added, trying to give "Shorty" a chance to get out of it.

Gray did not want to have the man taken up. He was dangerous at large, but it was more dangerous for Gray to have to appear in the court against him.

"Yes, yes, he is not the man—no, no, not the man."

"Shorty" took his cue.

"But don't you want to appear against him and have him sent up?" asked Carter.

"Who are you that you're so anxious to have the poor fellow put in prison?" asked Gray.

"I'm only a citizen," said Carter, "but I think there are too many thugs in the streets now, and it is the duty of every good citizen to have them put behind the bars."

"Well, let this poor man go," Gray demanded.

Carter slipped the handcuffs off "Shorty's" wrists and he slunk away in the darkness as fast as he could, lest Carter should change his mind and come after him.

Carter was not very sorry to let the man go. Appearing in the courts was as little to his liking as it was to Gray's, and would put a stop to the work he had in hand.

The two men went a little farther together, and then Gray, saying "Good-night," left Carter standing at a corner. He signaled a cabman and got into a vehicle. The driver whipped up and they went off at a rapid rate. Carter looked about for another cab or any sort of a carriage to follow in, but none came, and before he knew it Gray was out of sight.

Nick Carter would have liked to follow Gray, but it was too late and there was nothing to do but to go back to the hotel.

As he walked along, Carter thought over the proceedings of the night. There was no doubt that Gray and Beatrice Farley were working together to attain some end. That end must necessarily be evil, because he was sure that both were crooks.

The strangest thing of all was that he should have been the means of saving Gray's life.

"I wonder why I happened to be there to save him?" he mused. "Perhaps fate has something in store for him that will be better to his liking. Besides it would have hurt my little case if he were to be killed. I am beginning to think I need him in my business. At any rate, we'll see, perhaps sooner than I think."

So saying, he entered the hotel.

CHAPTER VI.

NICK CARTER GETS A JOB.

A few minutes later, Antoine, the porter, took his station in the hall after explaining to the night porter that he had been off post to carry the luggage of a guest to the railway station and had forgotten to tell him about it. The head porter called him down and Antoine, with an affectation of deep repentance and a promise not to let it happen again, hurried to his post.

A little after one A. M. his keen gray eyes saw Beatrice Farley glide noiselessly down the hall and stop at Mrs. Tighe's door.

In answer to a question, she said: "It's Beatrice—Beatrice Farley."

A second later the door was opened and she entered. In less than a second Nick Carter was listening at the door.

The voices were very low—evidently Mrs. Tighe did not want to disturb her husband in the next room.

Carter strained his ears to hear what was being said, but for a time the words were only an indistinct murmur. However, in a little while, as the two women became interested, their voices rose.

"—— last he said ten days," said Mrs. Tighe.

"I know that," answered the maid, "but to-night he said that he wanted the money now."

"But I can't get it, and you know it. Where can I raise twenty thousand dollars?"

"But you must. You know what happened to Louise——"

"Oh, God, don't mention the poor child!"

"Well, he says that what happened to her may happen to some one else unless the money is paid, and he even hinted that you would be the next."

"The villain threatened me himself. But how can I know can I get the money? I have tried pawning my jewels, but my husband found out in some way what I was trying to do and insisted on my wearing them to dinner the other night, and I had to send and get them."

"And another thing, he made me give him the knife with which you killed——"

"Stop! stop! You know that is false. That is another devilish invention of his. He did the deed, and is now using it to persecute me. The coward! the coward!"

"You can call him all the names you like, but it won't do you any good."

At that moment Nick Carter heard steps coming along the corridor and rushed noiselessly back to his post. It was the other porter coming to relieve him. Another gave him the time of day, and then said:

"Look here. I was off duty a long while to-night and the head waiter gave me a dressing down and told me to take your shift."

"He did, did he? Well, I am sorry for you," and he laughed.

"You had better hurry along to your room or some one will come and ask you to do something," Carter advised the man, trying to get the fellow out of the way so that he could listen to the conversation going on in Mrs. Tighe's room.

"All right, I will," the porter answered, and then sneaked to his room as fast as he could.

Carter rushed to the door in his noiseless fashion and found that the voices had become indistinct again. He listened, however, and was rewarded sooner than he had expected.

"Then we sail to-morrow?" asked Beatrice Farley.

"Yes. Thank Heaven! we will leave this pest hole then, and I won't breathe until we do," was Mrs. Tighe's response.

"Do you know on what ship we sail?"

"Yes, but I cannot tell you until we are getting ready."

"You can't—I'd like to know why," in a very defiant manner.

"Because I don't wish Gray to know, and you know why I don't."

At the mention of Arthur Gray's name Carter started and made a note of it mentally.

"But I must know. You must tell me."

"No, I will not."

"Well, if you don't——"

"Don't you dare to threaten me, you brazen-faced huzzy."

"If you don't tell me, I will tell the police all I know of your cutting Louise's throat, and they——"

"Stop! stop! you fiend!" the older woman almost shrieked. "I will tell you anything if you will stop."

"I thought that would bring you to terms. You know the police would have a lovely case against you. Every one knows that you treated the poor child like a true stepmother, and ——"

"Beatrice Farley, leave this room at once! Leave it, I say!"

"Not until you tell me what I want to know."

"I will call my husband—I will call the porter."

At this Carter jumped and prepared for fight, but the man merely remained [illegible].

"You don't dare! If you do, I will expose you."

"Stop! Speak lower. You don't want to be heard all over the hotel, do you?"

"Oh, I don't care."

"But I do, and I am not going to have to answer my husband's questions at this time of the night."

"Well, tell me what ship you sail on, and I will go."

"All right, have your own way. We sail on the steamship *Grosvenor*. Now go."

"Thank you, madam," the maid saucily replied, and turned to go.

Nick Carter withdrew quickly from the door, and was walking down the corridor, yawning sleepily, when Beatrice Farley met him. She glanced at him sharply, but only saw Antoine, the porter. Beatrice Farley went direct to her room, and while Carter listened at her door, he heard her undress and go to bed.

Carter returned to his post, and began to sum up what he had found and was [illegible].

He was more satisfied with himself than he had been for a long time. The case was hardly more than eighteen hours old, and he had found several very suspicious circumstances, and at least two people who, he was sure, had some connection with it. He was sure that Beatrice Farley knew by whom the murder had been committed, and more than half sure that Gray had had a hand in it.

There was another peculiar feature which seemed to relate itself to the affair. Why could Gray demand twenty thousand dollars from Mrs. Tighe, and what hold had he over her?

[illegible] more important than all of these: How did he barely learn with which the murder had been done into her room, and be found by the maid, Beatrice [illegible], on her dressing table? He was sure that Mrs. Tighe had not been guilty of the crime. She had not [illegible] for one thing; it takes a great deal of [illegible] human life, especially in cold blood, to [illegible] had been killed.

There was another reason also. Mrs. Tighe must have known that her only hold over her husband and his money was through his daughter. She knew that he did not care for her any longer, after he had found out that she was only after his money.

All these, and many more questions presented themselves to the detective's mind, and as he sat in his chair waiting for the porter who was to relieve him at four in the morning, he did some heavy thinking.

One thing he decided was very necessary.

When the Tighes sailed he would sail with them, and so must Gray. Beatrice Farley would be with them, as she was going as Mrs. Tighe's maid. But if Gray was left behind? That must not happen, and the only way to prevent that was to let him know that they were sailing.

He thought he might trust the Farley woman to let Gray know, but he was not sure that it suited her to do so, and when the ship sailed it would be too late.

Four o'clock struck as he was thinking of this, and the next porter came to take his place.

Carter was not sorry to see him, as he had things to attend to which would take him out of the hotel.

As soon as he changed from his porter's uniform, Carter returned to his own hotel and packed his clothing. It consisted of his many disguises and the other things he found necessary in his business. All these things he placed in a dunnage-bag such as is used by sailors and seafaring people generally, and after settling his bill he started for the docks.

He found the steamer just finishing coaling, and the captain taking his morning coffee. Carter told the watchman at the bridge that he desired to see the captain. The sailor looked at him, and remarked:

"I guess you want to see the chief stoker, don't you?" thinking that Carter wanted to work for his passage across.

Carter said: "No, I don't. I want a job as a waiter on the way over."

"Well, you'd better see the head steward, then," the man responded. Just then the captain came out of his cabin, and was passing by them, when Carter recognized him and spoke.

"How do you do, captain?"

The captain looked at him, and said: "Well, what can I do for you?"

"I want a job as a waiter, or steward. I guess you call them." Carter answered.

"We don't need any more stewards," the captain said, and turned to go away.

Carter caught his arm and whispered in his ear one or two words, and then the captain said, gruffly:

"Come to my cabin! You can wait outside, and I will send the head steward that way when I see him."

Carter followed him to his cabin, and, after looking about to see that no one saw them, the captain stood aside and motioned to Carter to enter. The detective did so and took a seat.

"You say you are Nick Carter, the detective?" the captain asked him, looking at him keenly. "Remember, I know him, and you certainly don't look like him. I went to school with him when we were boys, and even then he was a detective."

"Do you think you'd recognize him if you were to see him?" Carter asked, smiling; then he removed his mustache and wig, and, straightening himself up, he looked at the captain.

"Nick Carter, by all that's holy!" that worthy exclaimed; "well, I am glad to see you." And he wrung the detective's hand as though he would break it off.

They talked for a little while, and the upshot of it was that Carter was to become the captain's body servant for the trip over instead of a steward, as he was first intended to be, because it would give him more time to himself than the other job would have done.

Carter told the captain enough of the murder case to let him know what he was working on, and when the captain assured him that there were irons on board and that they were at his service Carter smiled.

"I am afraid we won't need them this trip," he said; "but I won't promise you that."

"I'm not so sure about that," the captain replied. "I know I'd hate to have you after me. If I knew you were in my trail I'd just give up and save you trouble, because it would come out all the same in the end."

Carter smiled at the compliment, and then they decided what were his duties. He was to do enough to allay all suspicions that might arise from his position, but these were not what would prevent him in any way from watching the people in the case.

His only worry now was that Gray might not sail with the party, and, as he had several hours before the sailing time, he set out to make sure that the man knew.

He went first to the hotel to see what Beatrice Farley had done.

CHAPTER VII.

IN MIDOCEAN.

When Nick Carter reached the hotel he was again the Rev. Nicodemus Jepson, and he had his card sent up to Harold Tighe, a few minutes after nine, and that gentleman immediately came down to see him.

Harold Tighe lost no time in getting down to business and began by asking how Nick Carter had progressed and what he had done.

"I have done better than I expected, Mr. Tighe, so far," the detective answered, "and I am sure that before two weeks are up I can tell you who was the murderer."

"Thank God!" fervently exclaimed Harold Tighe. "I was afraid that it was to prove a much more difficult case."

"Oh, it is difficult enough, but I have great hopes now of landing the criminal, and you will be surprised when you find out who it is——"

"Whom do you suspect?" asked Tighe, eagerly. Then, slowly noting Carter's reluctance to speak: "It is not my wife—is it?"

"No, sir," Carter answered, quickly. "You greatly wrong her. She at least is not guilty."

"Then who is it?"

"I cannot tell yet. However, you will be the first one to know when I am sure myself."

"Then I shall have to possess myself in patience until that time; but I am not a very patient man, and the sooner it comes the better!"

"By the way, Mr. Tighe, have you seen anything of our friend, Mr. Arthur Gray, to-day?"

"Why, yes; I was going to tell you about him. We had breakfast together only a few minutes ago. He was in the breakfast room when I came down and I could not escape him."

"Where is he now?"

"With my wife, I think—I know he sent his card up to her, and she sent that fly maid down to tell him to come up after he had had his breakfast. The sly devil smiled one of those evil smiles across the table at me, and said: 'With your permission?' I told him to go and see her, and I felt like adding and be damned to you both."

"I am interested in this man, and I would like to know what they are talking about," said Carter. "I have seen him before and he is—I am sure he is a crook."

"Well, I don't fancy the man."

"Where did you first meet him?" asked Carter.

"Why, my wife said he was an old friend of hers, and when she introduced him as such he said: 'Yes, I am a very old friend of your wife's. I knew her out West years ago.' And it seemed to me that my wife flashed him a warning glance at that remark."

"What made you remember it?" asked Carter.

"In the course of the talk which followed I tried to get him to tell me about his having known my wife out West, but he always got out of the question in some way."

"That was strange! His having spoken of the West brings back a face I saw not there, which is the exact image of his. This man was a gambler, and it was said that he would steal horses and cattle if they were easily gotten away with."

"Well, I would believe that of Gray! There is another strange thing about him. He seems to have some sort of influence over my wife."

"He has, has he?"

"Yes! I don't know what it is, and I don't care. But it is strange—I think it must come from some deal in which they figured out West before I met her."

"Well, you sail to-day—at twelve, is it not?"

"Yes, and I must be about my packing now. Will you be at home?"

"I most certainly shall. But you will not know me, and I will not speak to you unless I think it necessary. But look here, before I go I want to take a last look at your daughter."

"All right, come up with me," and Harold Tighe led the way to the elevator. At the third floor Carter left the elevator first and led the way to the Tighe apartments. At the reception room door he stopped and listened. Gray and Mrs. Tighe were both inside talking earnestly. Carter heard him saying in a low, fierce whisper.

"Then you can't get it?"

"Not now—not now. But I can surely do so in a few days," answered the weak voice of the woman.

"Well, remember that I gave you ten days, and they dated from yesterday, and then——"

"Oh, yes, I know—I know."

"And remember I will be on the steamer, and that on the day after we land in New York twenty thousand dollars must be paid me, or, by heavens! Harold Tighe will need another wife, though I guess that his last one will have been quite enough."

"Please go now—I am not very well, and——"

"Yes, I know you are very delicate," he sneered, "but you don't seem so delicate that you can't cut a throat now and then."

With this parting retort he turned to go.

Harold Tighe and Nick Carter were in the next room by the time he reached the corridor, and he did not see either of them. He went to the elevator, and evidently was in a hurry to pack his belongings so that he could leave at noon.

Carter had heard enough of the conversation to convince him that the man was terrorizing Mrs. Tighe, and that he was to be on the same ship with them. This was what he wanted to know, and he was glad that he had thought to take a final survey of the scene of the murder.

Mr. Tighe had not heard anything of what was said, and Carter thought it best not to tell him anything. So when Tighe asked questions the detective bluffed him out of an answer.

When they reached the room where Louise's body

still lay it was in dim darkness, and after closing the doors the detective pulled all the blinds up, thus allowing the sun to shine in. He then went to the bed and turned the dead girl's face, so that it was in the full light, and then removed the coverings from her neck, showing the horrible wound through which her young life had escaped.

Carter then quickly produced a folding camera from his pocket, and took six exposures of the girl's body as it lay there. He then returned everything to its former position.

All this time Tighe was looking on in silence.

"What did you take these pictures for?" he asked, at last.

"I cannot tell you exactly," Carter answered, "but the idea came to me, and I find that I always regret it when I allow a hunch to pass by and don't take it."

"Well, you may need them—you can't tell," was the father's response.

There was a knock on the door, and when it was opened the undertaker's assistants entered, accompanied by an officer. They wanted to prepare the body and put it in the casket in which it was to be shipped to the United States, so Tighe and Carter withdrew.

Tighe asked Carter if he wanted to see Mrs. Tighe, but the detective declined the pleasure, and telling Tighe that it would not be very long before his troubles were at an end, went back to the ship.

A few minutes before sailing, the Tighe family, with Beatrice Farley, came on board.

Carter had been watching for Gray, but, although he carefully scrutinized every one who came to the ship, he was forced to admit that while he was sure the crook had sailed with them, he had not recognized him.

As soon as they were well out in the channel it began to be rough, and before two days had passed nearly all the women on board were confined to their cabins, and most of the men were in the same condition.

For three days Carter was not sure that Gray was really on the ship, but his fears on that score were allayed when he followed Beatrice Farley to the second cabin, where servants took their meals.

She passed into the saloon, and took her seat at the end of the long table.

Beside her sat an elderly gentleman with whiskers streaked with gray, who seemed to be suffering from a severe cold in the head. He was muffled up closely and seemed to have little to say.

Carter looked at him, and for a moment something about him seemed to be familiar, and the detective decided to watch him and see why it was.

Carter took a seat behind Beatrice Farley and the stranger, where he could eat and listen with ease.

For a little while neither spoke, except to exchange the commonplaces which are customary, and then he heard the elderly gentleman say, in an undertone:

"How's the old lady?"

"Pretty sick," the maid answered, without raising her eyes from her plate.

"And in a lovely temper, I suppose, eh?"

"No, not very—I don't stand for her tantrums. When she gets fresh I just hand her one about Louise, and she closes her face."

"Good—that's the way to handle her—just play on her fears and she will do anything."

"Well, you don't seem to be able to get any money out of her."

"Never mind, it is coming."

"The sooner the better."

"Ah, I see you want your little bit."

"That's right, I do! I can use that five thou."

"I suppose you have already made up your mind what you will do with it?"

"Not quite; but I know I will put it to a better use——"

"Than I, eh?"

"That's what I was going to say," she retorted, looking at him.

"Well, you need not kick. On the last little deal we were in together you got your share."

"I know I did, and I have it yet."

"Well, that is a good deal more than I can say—that little game down in the South put me on the bum."

"Yes, and you've been there ever since!" she sneered.

"That was mostly hard luck."

"Hard luck! I don't think."

"Well, I will admit that that infernal detective ——"

"Who do you mean? Not Nick Carter?"

"Oh, no! But it was almost as bad—his assistant, Chick."

"Chick Carter, you mean."

"Yes, that devil! He got on my trail down in Savannah, and I had to sneak."

"What did you do? Go West?"

"No, siree; I took a cattle steamer for England. When those Carters get after you you had better get right off the earth."

At this Nick Carter smiled softly, looking at his plate as though only interested in his dinner.

Then Gray—for Carter had easily recognized him upon hearing his voice, even though he was almost as well disguised as Carter himself—commenced speaking again.

"That's all ancient history now. What I want to know is what the old lady is going to do about the money."

"Why, she will cough up. She will have to."

"You bet she will—I told her that it would be very unhealthy for her not to do so."

"You would not really kill her?"

"S-s-h! Not so loud!" he warned her, and looked about him.

The saloon was almost empty by this time, and Carter was the only person near them. Gray scrutinized his face as quickly, but decided that he had not heard anything, and then answered Beatrice Farley's question.

"No, I would not kill her. Was I ever such a fool as to do my own dirty work?" and he leered wickedly at the girl.

She looked at him, and when their glances met a slight shudder went through her. Then she dropped her eyes to her plate, and Carter noticed that the glass she was in the act of raising to her lips shook so that some of its contents were spilled on the table cloth.

"No, you aren't. That is, if you can get a woman to do it for you," she said.

"Well, what are women for? I needed some one to throw the fear into Alice Tighe, and the tool was handy. That was a master stroke having her put the knife where——"

"Oh, stop! Don't go over the story again! I cannot stand it!"

"How devoted you were to poor, dear Louise!" he sneered.

"Well, I never would have hurt her, and you know that——"

"Oh, yes, you are quite guiltless," and he laughed with his evil smile, "but I wonder what Harold Tighe would say."

"Never mind him!" she said; "he does not count in this game."

"He doesn't, eh? Well, he holds the checkbook, my dear, and that is where he comes in."

"That's so, and I wish we could get at it. But look here, Arthur, I am getting tired of this game. It does not seem to pay, and we are running a chance of being found out, and you know it."

"Found out! Oh, rats! How can we be?" he asked her.

"I don't know, but you remember that affair of the dog and the house in Paris, when you were so neatly done up?"

"Oh, yes; I have not forgotten it. But that was a plain case of attempted robbery."

"That may be, but the dog acted as though the house had been pretty thoroughly watched before the attempt was made to enter it."

"I remember, and at the time I thought that it was a peculiar business; but a robber would have looked for a place to enter the house easily, and would not have hesitated to knock me down as he did."

"Well, I hope you are right!"

"I know I am"—and then they ate in silence for a little time. Carter was highly pleased with his success so far, and was doing some tall thinking, trying to connect the incidents of the plot.

He had made his mind up to one thing, and that was that Arthur Gray and Beatrice Farley were a dangerous pair.

"I tell you what we'll do"—Gray started talking

again—"before we land in New York we must give the old lady a scare that will make her forge her husband's name to get the money, or in fact do anything else! You know she asked me to forge a letter for her, which was to have come from a distant relative begging for the money, and she was going to work it in on her dear Harold."

"Why did you not do it?"

"Because Harold Tighe is no fool, and he mistrusts her. He would not be taken in so easily as all that."

"Does she expect the letter?"

"No! I told her the last time I saw her in Paris that it was no go."

"What did she say?"

"Oh, she was wild and threw a few fits as she always does when things don't go her way."

"I suppose she threw herself on your mercy and gave you that sort of a story?"

"Of course she did"—this with that sinister smile—"and now she knows how much mercy is coming to her."

"Well, but look! We are the only persons in the saloon," for Carter was just leaving.

He felt that if he remained it would only excite suspicion, and he had heard enough to satisfy him and place him where to expect the next outbreak of villainy.

CHAPTER VIII.

ONE MYSTERY SOLVED.

Beatrice Farley and Gray arose and followed the detective from the saloon, and as they reached the companionway Carter stood aside to allow them to pass. They lowered their voices, and yet, as they passed him, Gray muttered: "All right, on the last night we will s[illegible]" but they had gone past, and Carter could not follow without causing them to suspect him.

"Well, I guess I won't have much trouble with that precious pair until the day before we land, and that gives me a day or two's rest. Heaven knows I may need it. But there is one thing sure now—that these people know who killed Louise, and, what is more, I am beginning to feel that they had more than a hand in it."

Carter continued his thoughts, and was about to go to the captain's cabin, when Harold Tighe came out of it with a worried look on his face. He looked at Carter a moment, and then asked the way to the smoking room. Carter answered: "At the end of that passage turn to the right, Mr. Tighe, and then go down the——"

"Hello! I must be pretty well known, and I never traveled on this ship before! How did you know my name?"

"Why, Nick Carter told me," answered the supposed member of the ship's crew.

"Carter told you?" exclaimed Tighe, in a dazed way.

"Why, how did you know him?" and then, as the detective smiled and reached up and removed his mustache and wig: "Heavens! it is you!"

"Yes, it is I! You did not think I had deserted you, did you?"

"No, because you have never left any one in a hole; but I was beginning to worry about you and wanted to ask you how you were getting on."

"Pretty well, I am glad to say," answered the detective, assuming his disguise again, "and I hope to make a very favorable report to you when we reach New York."

"You will tell me who the cowardly slayer of my daughter is?" The older man shut his teeth sternly at the thought of it.

"Yes, I will, and here's my hand on it."

"Is he on this ship?"

"He or she is—I haven't made up my mind to the sex of the murderer yet."

"It could not have been a woman?"

"Perhaps so! But I must not tell you now."

"But who can it be—not my wife?"

"No! no! no! Whatever her faults are, you wrong her there. It was not your wife."

"Then it must have been the Farley woman?"

"Mr. Tighe, I cannot say yet, and all I will advise you to do is to wait patiently and all will be found out."

"Then I will have to do so, Mr. Carter; but thank Heaven I have the hope that you hold out to me."

Nick Carter smiled, and was about to reply, when the captain's voice was heard calling: "Orderly! Orderly! Here!" and Carter, with a parting remark that Harold Tighe had better cheer up, ran to answer the call.

The captain had been trifling around for Carter to do and as the detective crossed the deck he saw Mrs. Tighe cuddled up on one of the steamer chairs. As soon as she saw him she began to call, "Steward! steward!" and realizing that the call must be for him, Nick Carter ran to her.

She wanted him to get her some champagne, as she was feeling very badly.

He did so, and as he handed it to her noticed that she was looking like a woman twenty years older than she really was. Her cheeks were sunken, and her eyes were far back in her head. Her voice was low and weak, and upon attempting for the first time since she had been seasick for several days, Carter was shocked to see how feeble she looked.

For a moment a wave of compassion mingled with pity swept over him, and he thought what a mean and contemptible a thing it was to persecute this poor, frail woman. In a moment she had finished the drink, and then in her most overbearing manner told him that that was all she wanted, and that he could find her husband for her. She asked where to ask for, and she jumped on him.

"Don't you know who I am?"

"No, madam, I am sorry I don't," he answered.

"Then you'd better find out. I am Mrs. Harold Tighe, and don't you forget it! Now, hustle, you fellow!"

Carter's pity for the woman in her distress vanished, and with a servile "Very well, ma'am," he did as she told him.

He found Harold Tighe in the smoking-room and delivered the message. Tighe looked at him inquiringly, but the detective's face was a blank. He had nothing to tell Tighe.

Tighe took his time, and when he reached his wife that lady was in a rage.

"Why did you not come before?" she angrily asked.

"Oh, I came as soon as I could," he answered, quietly.

"Well, you took a pretty long time! And I wanted you in a hurry."

"Why? What was your hurry?" he asked.

"I wanted to know where we were going when we were again in New York."

"I am going to a hotel, and you, of course, will go to the house on Riverside."

"Well, I call that cool! Aren't you coming with me?"

"I told you in Paris that we would separate and each lead our own lives from now on."

"Oh, yes, I remember that, but I did——"

"Didn't think I meant it, eh?"

"To tell the truth, I didn't."

"Well, I did, and I really meant it; we will be together at the funeral, and I will ask as a last favor that you will keep up the semblance, at least, of our being the devoted couple every one thinks we are," and he smiled in a sneering way.

"Well, now that I understand where we stand, I am going to ask you to make me a regular allowance to live on."

"All right, I will do that." Then to himself, "That's easy."

"Thank you, but will you advance me some of it now?"

"Now! You want it now?"

"Yes."

"But you don't need it; wait until we land."

"No! I must have it now!"

"Well, for the sake of peace, I will give it to you. How much do you want?"

"Twenty thousand dollars."

"Twenty thousand dollars! Why, you must be crazy!"

"No, I am not! I want that much and I must have it."

"that that is as much as I intended to give you for a ...ole year's expenses."

"A whole year's expenses! You cannot mean that! It costs us almost that to run the house in town, not ... count the country place."

"Oh, I know all about that! Haven't I paid your bills for the last ten years?"

"We'll never agree on the amount if you begin talking like that, and you know it! You are trying to cut me off so that I cannot make a decent appearance in society. I see that, and that is the way you hope to get rid of me!"

"Not so! You know what you call society has no attractions for me."

"No, you prefer your clubs and the gambling dens."

"We won't discuss that. I tell you what I will do: I will pay all your bills and allow you the twenty thousand for pin money."

"That is more like it, but I need the pin money now."

"You can't have it now. I will give it to you as a regular allowance, so much each quarter," he answered, setting his jaw in a determined manner, which she well knew meant that it was final.

"But I must have the money! If I don't get it"—she was becoming desperate now—"something terrible will happen to me, and even you will be drawn into the scandal which will result."

"Something terrible will happen to you, eh?"

"Yes, and to you also."

"Well, I don't care for myself, and as you know, I care even less for you."

"Oh, Carl! you are heartless! You used to love me and——"

"I used to, but you must remember I was a fool then; I have gotten bravely over that."

"And you are deserting me in my greatest need."

"Perhaps so! But if you need the money so badly and won't tell me for what purpose—well, you can have it." He turned to go.

Alice Tighe thought quickly for a moment, weighing the results which she was afraid would come from telling him. For a moment she decided to do so, and then she remembered Gray's warning, "If you tell any one why the money is wanted, and who wants it, I will have you killed as I would a dog who had bitten me." And her poor, weak nerve failed her, and she allowed her husband to go back to the smoking room.

She had lost her chance.

If she had only thought to tell him that she would sell him a clew to the murderer of Louise, she might have succeeded in getting the money. But when he left her and she realized that her only chance was gone, a feeling of the deepest despair came over her. She even thought of jumping overboard, and thus saving herself from what she dreaded. But the thought of the water was too much for her, and she settled back in her steamer chair and began to think of her past life. Never a good woman, but not so great a sinner, her lack of nerve saved her from many deeds that took nerve to do.

While Harold Tighe and his wife were arguing, Nick Carter had gone to and fro on the deck, just above them, disguised as a deck steward, and had heard enough of their conversation to understand what it was about. To him it was all plain and clear why she wanted the money, and for a moment he thought of telling Tighe, but he did not see that there was any gain in doing so.

A few minutes later he passed her, and when she saw him she called to him and ordered him in her usual arrogant manner to call her maid. This time he did not feign ignorance as to who the maid was, but started to find her.

Carter went first to Mrs. Tighe's cabin, and not finding Beatrice Farley there, went to the maid's cabin in the second cabin part of the ship. She was not there either, and for a moment he was puzzled as to where she might be. His detective's instinct prompted him to try Gray's cabin, and he crossed to the other corridor on which it was.

Then Carter became the detective again, and went quietly to the door.

It was closed, but inside he heard a woman's voice.

They were talking in low tones, and Gray seemed trying to get her to do something which she did not want to do. They argued for a time, and then the

woman's voice was raised, and Carter recognized it as belonging to Beatrice Farley, as he expected it would.

She was refusing to do something, and the man was insisting on it. There was silence for a moment, and then she cried out:

"Don't! Oh! don't do it!"

Gray did not answer.

Then again: "Don't! don't! For God's sake, don't! You know what happened the last time. When I am that way I cannot tell what I will do."

"'S-s-h! 'S-s-h! Be calm! Stop!" came Gray's voice, interrupting her.

She drew her breath in so loudly that Carter could hear it, and then there was silence. The only sound was that of Gray moving, and then he commenced talking in a rather harsh tone of voice, but very low and distinct.

"This night, after you have said your prayers, Mrs. Alice Tighe, or bid, you will go to your couch and go to bed yourself.

"Your alarm clock will be set for four o'clock. When it strikes you will get up. Do you understand?"

There was a low murmur from the girl.

"All right," he responded, "that's good. Then you will take the knife which will be on the table under the looking-glass, at the head of your berth, and after putting on your wrapper, you will go very quietly to Mrs. Tighe's cabin. Do you understand?—to her cabin!"

Again the girl murmured a response. Then he went on:

"You will then open the door of the cabin very quietly with this key. After doing it you will go to the head of her bed and with your left hand you will take her by the hair. Take her by the hair! Do you understand?"

Again the murmur.

"Then you will shake her, and when she wakes up you will wave the knife across her face, so that she will see it shine. She will then scream, and you will let go of her and run as fast as you can to your cabin. But before you do so, you must close and lock the door of Mrs. Tighe's cabin. Do you understand?"—the girl repeated after him the words "and lock Mrs. Tighe's cabin," in a voice that sounded as though she were talking in her sleep.

Then Carter understood Gray's little game.

All Beatrice Farley's peculiar manner was explained. She was a hypnotic subject, and Gray was using her to do his dirty work.

The killing of Louise was no longer a mystery!

Gray, the villain, had made her murder. But the voice recommenced.

"You must take her by the hair and flourish the knife before her eyes. But you must not hurt her! It won't do to kill the goose that lays the golden eggs! Do you understand?"

And the dreamy voice of the woman answered him again, saying:

"It won't do to kill the goose that lays the golden eggs."

"Now repeat what I have told you!" Gray demanded.

The woman did so word for word. Gray seemed satisfied, and then said, very sharply and loudly:

"Wake up! Wake up! And Carter could hear the girl gasp, and then speak in the same low tone she had used before Gray had hypnotized her.

"What did you tell me, then?" she asked.

"Never mind, you will know soon enough!" he answered.

"But I want to know now."

"I cannot tell you."

"But, for God's sake, tell me this! There will be no——"

"No killing. No, I can promise you that. Now you had better go. Your mistress will want you."

"All right. Shall I tell her anything?"

"Remind her that this is her last chance to pay the money to-day, and that I won't be responsible for what will happen to-night."

"Well, so long, and I will see you to-morrow," Beatrice Farley answered, and they arose to leave the cabin.

When she reached the corridor, Carter was in the large saloon at the end of it, and as she came by spoke to her.

"Are you Mrs. Tighe's maid?"

"Yes, what does she want now?" she asked, pertly.

"I don't know; she asked me to get you, and I looked everywhere for you."

"Well, you found me at last, didn't you?" she quipped, and then walked slowly to the deck.

Carter looked after her, and muttered: "Yes, and I'll find you again pretty soon."

The ship was nearing the end of its voyage, and the passengers were feeling elated over their speedy trip.

Harold Tighe met Carter that night in a passageway, and as he passed him, said:

"Well, the end is near; have you anything to report?"

Carter looked at him, and smiled. "I have the murderer almost pinched and——"

"Great heavens! you have discovered him?" Tighe gasped.

"Yes, and by tomorrow I will tell you all about it, and if we have any sort of luck as well you know."

"My God! you don't leave it to luck?"

"As much to luck as I always do, and you know how much that is," responded Carter, smiling grimly.

"Yes, I do, and I feel sure that vengeance will be yours."

"No doubt of that, Mr. Tighe; we will get the murderess and marauder and will perhaps clear up other things."

"All right, Mr. Carter, I trust in you."

Some one was coming down the passage, and Carter moved away. As he did so he said, in an undertone:

"I'll awake at four o'clock tomorrow morning, and you may hear things."

Tighe looked at him keenly, and then started and opened his mouth to speak. But the great detective motioned him to be silent, and they parted.

Harold Tighe went to his cabin with mixed sensations, but feeling almost happy. His faith in Carter told him that he was about to find the murderer of his beloved daughter, and his heart was filled with joy. He wanted a chance to take revenge, and he promised himself that he would do it pretty thoroughly.

That night he went to bed with a peaceful mind, and after satisfying himself that his revolver was well oiled and ready for use, slept the sleep of the just—for the first time since the tragedy.

CHAPTER IX.

CONCLUSION.

About half-past three in the morning the well-built figure of the steward could be seen lounging in the dimly lighted saloon at the end of the passage through which Beatrice Farley must pass to reach her mistress' cabin.

The steward placed himself where the light was poorest, and when the ship's bell tolled eight bells—which is four o'clock—he heard the sharp tingle of an alarm clock.

Light as the sound was, it brought Carter to his feet and set his heart beating faster than it had done for a long time.

He was only to wait a minute.

The door of Beatrice Farley's cabin opened noiselessly and she came out, moving with a stumbling step. Carter watched her closely and saw the knife held close to her bosom.

She passed near him, and as she went under the light he saw that her eyes were only half open, and that she looked more like an animated corpse than a live person.

She stumbled on, and after a moment's hesitation walked direct to her mistress' cabin. At the door she hesitated again, and Carter saw her fumble for the key.

At the moment she turned it in the lock Nick Carter stealthily ran up the passage.

The door was opened, and she entered without making a sound.

Carter followed her.

She went direct to the bed. Carter saw the woman on the bed open her eyes, and then their expression, changing from surprise to utter terror, she strove to cry out.

Beatrice Farley grasped her hair and raised the knife to strike.

Carter caught her hand and bent her arm back until she was over-balanced, and then threw her on the floor. The woman cried out with the pain, for he had used a well-known wrestling trick to hurt her, and——

"Wake up! wake up!" cried Nick, loudly, and with a gasp Beatrice Farley came to herself.

She looked at Carter, and then at Mrs. Tighe, who had fainted, and then at the knife which she held in her hand.

Carter tore his wig and mustache from his face, and with the same movement switched on the electric light.

"Oh, God! Nick Carter!" gasped the girl.

"Yes, it is I! And, what is more, I have caught you in the act!" Carter said, coolly, and reached into his pocket for his handcuffs.

"You shall never take me! I did not! What have I done?"

"Killed Louise Tighe, and now you have attempted to kill her mother," he answered.

"Oh, God! No, no, no! I did not want to kill Mrs. Tighe. I would not have killed Louise——"

"But you did so and now——" and Carter reached down to place the handcuffs on her.

"No, no! You cannot take me," she cried, and then, before he could catch her hand, plunged the knife into her breast and sank back with a moan. "You cannot take me now! You are cannot take me!" she gasped. "I did not mean to kill her! No, no!"

Just then Harold Tighe rushed into the cabin.

"What is this? What is this?" he cried, and then, running to his wife's berth, he put his hand on her breast.

"Only fainted," Carter said, quietly.

"But what's this?" panted Tighe, pointing to the dying girl on the floor.

"I caught her in the act of stabbing your wife," Carter answered, "and when she saw that the game was up she killed herself with this knife." And he handed Tighe the weapon.

"The weapon that is the knife which was missing from my wife's dressing-case on the morning of the murder!"

"Yes, and it is the one with which your daughter was killed," Carter rejoined.

"It is. Oh! heavens," Tighe gasped, letting the weapon drop on the floor.

"The girl is dying! She is dying!"

Carter pointed to Beatrice Farley.

"Yes, yes, what can we do?" asked Tighe.

"Before she dies she will have a conscious spell." said Carter, stooping over her and stanching the flow of blood with a towel.

Tighe stood stupidly looking on, and then Carter, noticing that he was of no use, called to him sharply:

"Run! Get the doctor and the captain, and be quick about it! Run! run for your life!"

Tighe awoke from his trance and flew.

Carter was doing his best for the girl, but he saw that her wound was mortal, and she could live only a few minutes.

Mrs. Tighe came to, and seeing the dying girl immediately fainted again.

Carter looked at her when he heard her exclamation, and said: "That's good! That puts her out of the way," and then turned his attention to Beatrice Farley, who was dying now.

Her breath was coming slower and slower, and all the color had gone from her brazenly pretty face.

Carter felt her bare feet and found that they were getting cold.

"God! I wish they'd hurry," he muttered.

At that moment Nick heard voices and running feet and the captain and surgeon bolted into the room, followed by Tighe.

Nick spoke to the surgeon quickly and sharply.

"Give her something to bring her to! Quick, now! She is dying!"

The surgeon reached into his case of instruments, which he had in his hurry grabbed up, and uncorked a vial. He forced some of the stuff between the lips of the dying girl, and then gave her an injection. She gasped, and then her eyes flickered open. She looked about her with affright and then began to moan.

"The cursed coward-ess, made a woman do his [illegible]

week! Curses on him!" And then began to mutter, unintelligibly:

"Quickly, come close," commanded Carter.

They all did so.

"Why did you kill her? Why did you kill Louise?" he asked, in a loud voice.

The girl looked at him, and then sneered: "Huh, you'd like to know, wouldn't you?" Then she choked with the blood in her throat.

"I'm going to tell you"—she was gasping now.

Carter motioned to the surgeon then and he gave her another injection.

"Yes, yes, I'll tell you; he—that man, Gray—you know him, you know—he's the crook, Jimmy Green; he made me do it."

"But why? But why?" asked all of them in a single breath.

"He told me to do it—he used to be married to Alice Tighe there on the bed. Harold Tighe's wife, who was my mistress, you know." And she closed her eyes again. Carter propped her body up in a different position, and the surgeon gave her some strong salts to smell.

She gasped and panted a second, and then commenced speaking.

"Yes, that Jimmy Green was a crook—well, he was married to Alice, you know, and then he got into a bad trouble—yes, a bad trouble down in Texas, and she remarried—they said he was killed"—and here her voice began to grow shrill—"Alice came to New York and she caught a rich sucker there. Ha! ha! ha!" and the poor thing laughed—"and then she married the sucker—his name was Harold Tighe; I knew him, too."

Her voice was sinking now, and Carter was beginning to fear that they would never hear the true story of the murder.

"What did she do after that?" he asked.

"Oh, yes, Mrs. Tighe?" She was talking to herself now, and they could scarcely hear her. Then suddenly she straightened herself up.

"He made me—he made me"—she almost shrieked—"he came to his wife in Paris and said if she did not give him money he would tell all about her to Harold Tighe. Oh, yes, I know—I was there. And she tried to get the money, and her man was tight and wouldn't give up, and then Green killed Louise, to show her what was what, and he made me do it—in the morning, in the hotel. I was standing by the dressing table, and the knife was all bloody; and Green said I had done it, and he would call the cops; and I begged and he let me off; and I said Mrs. Tighe did it, and"—the voice had become a whisper again—"we tried to get the money, and he was here on the ship and he came to me and made me go and kill Alice Tighe, and—oh! oh!" she was choking now; the blood had filled her throat and the surgeon tried to help her.

She gasped and then muttered: "Yes! yes! He did it!"

A moment later Carter placed the girl's body straight on the floor, and said:

"Poor thing! she is dead!"

The surgeon bent over her.

"Yes, she is quite dead," he said, and the captain took off his cap, which, in his hurry, he had put on.

Carter turned to the last.

Mrs. Tighe lay there with her eyes staring wide open. She had an expression of agony on her face, and in the electric light looked like a wax figure.

Carter looked at her and then: "Good God! she is not dead, too?" he gasped. The surgeon brushed him aside and felt her heart.

"Great heavens! She is dead!" He reached for his instruments and adjusted his stethescope.

He listened for the heart, and then applied restoratives, but the woman was really dead. The heart, which had always been weak, had at last given up its fight and broken.

Tighe sank to the floor on his knees by the bedside, but Carter grasped him roughly by the shoulder.

"Green is on this ship. Do you hear? The man who killed her and Louise is on board. Don't you want to——"

"Ay, I want to kill him! Lead me to him!" and Tighe leaped to his feet.

Tighe, the captain and the surgeon, guided by Carter, fairly flew to the second cabin. When they reached

the corridor, where Gray's cabin was, Carter blocked the way.

"Quietly! Quietly!" he urged.

Then they noiselessly went to the cabin.

Carter tried the door, but it was locked. He placed his pass key in the lock, and at that moment there was an exclamation within.

The detective plunged in, and there was a shot.

For a moment there was a struggle, and then it was seen that Carter had overpowered the other man, and Gray's disguise had fallen off.

"Carter, by God!" he gasped.

Carter laughed.

"Yes, Jimmy Green, I've wanted you for a long time, and now I've got you," he answered.

"It won't do you any good," sneered the other man.

"It won't do me any good? Well, I guess so! Beatrice Farley has split on you, and I am onto the whole game!"

"Hell!—the——"

"Don't curse her; she is dead!"

Harold Tighe was standing as though stupefied. He could not believe that the man who had caused him the greatest grief of his whole life was Gray. But the man's words assured him that the girl, Beatrice Farley, had spoken truly.

"You cursed villain!" he growled, and before they could catch him, had sprung at Gray, who was still on the floor, being held down by Carter.

The detective caught the maddened man, and in the struggle which ensued Gray got to his feet.

The captain stepped him, and as Carter caught the man again he slipped the handcuffs on him.

The surgeon was holding Harold Tighe back, and after a little while peace was restored.

That day the steamer came into the beautiful harbor of New York, and the passengers were all excited with the things which had happened on board. When the passengers had boarded her, they were given wild tales about Nick Carter's wonderful discovery of the murderer, and their stories in the papers next morning were startling to say the least.

On board the ship no one knew where Nick Carter was, and when an athletically built young man carried Mr. Tighe's hand baggage off the ship they little suspected that he was the famous detective.

Harold Tighe was very grateful to Nick Carter, and tried to make a great deal of his feat, as it deserved. The detective, however, only smiled, and would do no grand stand playing.

"To catch that crook Green," he said, "gave me so much pleasure that I don't want any praise, thank you."

Harold Tighe was a constant attendant at the trial of James Green, alias Arthur Gray, and when he heard the judge decree that he meet his death by the electric chair, he rose and left the court-room with the first smile which had passed his face since that terrible morning in Paris when his daughter was murdered.

His daughter and the woman, who had thought she was his wife, were buried in Greenwood Cemetery, but not in the same grave or plot of ground.

The last act of the affair was when Harold Tighe had Nick Carter to dinner at the Waldorf, and we may be sure that the great detective was well satisfied with his meal, for "the laborer is worthy of his hire," and Nick Carter had surely earned his.

THE END.

The desecration of one of the graves in St. Paul's churchyard created a great sensation not only in New York, but throughout all the country. There seemed to be no possible reason for it. But there was, and a most sensational one. Nick Carter, assisted by Chick, discovered the first clew, and the great detective, after many extraordinary adventures, brought the whole mysterious affair to light. It is a splendid story, finely told, in the next issue, No. 368, "Nick Carter and the Grave Vandals; or, The Mystery of St. Paul's Churchyard."

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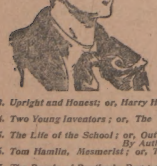

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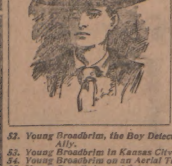

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